Schooling by Design: Strategies and Tools for Academic Leaders

presented by

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Schooling by Design:
Strategies and Tools for Academic Leaders

In this interactive session, we will explore the following essential questions from the book’s chapters (listed below). We’ll examine a variety of practical and proven strategies, processes, tools and examples to assist administrators, teacher leaders and policy makers in guiding and sustaining standards-based educational reform at the school or district level. Participants will have the opportunity to apply SbD principles and strategies while planning for a specific initiative or improvement goal.

Part A: A Vision of Schooling
Chapter 1 – What is the Mission of Schooling?

Chapter 2 – What Should Curriculum Accomplish?

Chapter 3 – How Should we Re-form the Curriculum?

Chapter 4 – How Can we Appropriately Depersonalize Teaching?

Chapter 5 – What’s My Job as Teacher (with students)?

Chapter 6 – What’s My Job as Teacher (without students)?

Chapter 7 – What’s My Job as Academic Leader?

Part B: Action
Chapter 8 – How Should Backward Design apply to School Reform?

Chapter 9 – Stage 1: What are the Desired Results of Reform?

Chapter 10 – Stage 2: What Evidence should we Collect and on What Feedback Should we Act?

Chapter 11 – Stage 3: What Actions Should We Plan?

Chapter 12 – What Habits Must We Confront?
Schooling by Design – Key Elements

- Mission and Philosophy
- Learning Principles
- Curriculum and Assessment System
- Instructional Programs and Practices
- Personnel – Hiring, Appraisal, Development
- Policies, Structures, Governance Resource Allocation

Schooling by Design

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## Stage 1 – Desired Results

### Established Goal(s):

- What relevant goals (e.g., Content Standards, Course or Program Objectives, Learning Outcomes etc.) will this design address?

### Understanding(s):

**Students will understand that...**

- What are the “big ideas”?
- What specific understandings about them are desired?
- What misunderstandings are predictable?

**Students will know...**

- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?
- What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skill?

**Students will be able to...**

### Essential Question(s):

- What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

### Performance Task(s):

- Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate the desired understandings?
- By what criteria will “performances of understanding” be judged?

### Other Evidence:

- Through what other evidence (e.g. quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals, etc.) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?
- How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

### Learning Activities:

- What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results?
- How will the design equip learners to demonstrate their understanding?
Stage 1 – Desired Results

Goal(s):
What needs do learning results/data reveal?
What improvements are needed? What is our vision? What do we want to accomplish as a result of this initiative?

Understanding(s):
What understandings and attitudes do teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers, etc. need for these goals to be met?

Essential Question(s):
What essential questions about teaching, learning, results and change should guide our improvement actions?

Knowledge & Skills:
What knowledge and skill will teachers, administrators, policy makers, parents, and students need for this vision to become a reality?

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Direct Evidence:
What will count as evidence of reform success?
What are the key observable indicators of short and long-term progress?

Indirect Evidence:
What other data (e.g., achievement gaps; staff understandings, attitudes, and practices; organizational capacity, etc.) should be collected?

Stage 3 – Action Plan

What short- and long-term actions will we take to achieve our goals (in curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional development, policy, resource allocation, job appraisal, etc.)?

What strategies will help us achieve the desired results?
Who will be responsible? What resources will be needed?
### Stage 1 – Desired Results

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### Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

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### Stage 3 – Action Plan

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# Backward Design Plan for an Elementary School Improvement Goal

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

**Goal(s):**
- Reduce the amount of whole-group instruction and increase use of appropriate differentiated strategies.
- Increase the use of pre-assessments to diagnose students’ readiness levels and guide differentiation.
- Increase the achievement (annual growth) of all student sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

**Understandings (for teachers):**
- Learners differ in their readiness (background knowledge, skills and experiences), learner profile (culture, gender, and preferred style) and interests.
- Learning is enhanced when these differences are acknowledged and addressed.
- Diagnostic (pre-) assessments are essential to reveal differences in readiness, profiles, and interests to guide differentiation.
- Respectful tasks engage learners with content standards in ways that appropriately challenge them.

**Essential Questions (for staff exploration):**
- Why should we differentiate our instruction?
- What does effective differentiation look like in the classroom?
- How do we decide what differentiation is needed?
- How can we make differentiation feasible with large classes?
- Is differentiation compatible with a standards-based accountability system?

**Knowledge:**  
*Staff will know...*
- basic principles and practices of differentiation
- the ways in which students differ
- the content standards and benchmarks that all students are expected to learn

**Skills:**  
*Staff will be able to...*
- apply basic differentiation strategies – tiered lessons, flexible groupings, scaffolded assignments, and giving appropriate choices
- use diagnostic (pre-) assessments effectively
- manage a differentiated classroom

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

**Direct Evidence:**  
*Classroom observations will find:*
- decreased use of whole-group instruction
- increased use of pre-assessments and appropriate differentiated instruction
- effective management of the class
- increase in student engagement in learning

*Student assessment data will show:*
- Increased achievement by sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

**Indirect Evidence:**
- Lesson plans include plan for differentiation.
- Teachers can explain how their instruction is responsive to student learning needs based on assessment data.
- Staff surveys identifying needs for future professional development.

## Stage 3 – Action Plan

- Purchase copies of Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design (ASCD, 2006) for all teaching staff, and encourage them to read the book during the summer.
- Use the pre-school professional days and our two in-service days for book discussion, exploration of essential questions, and staff workshops on differentiation strategies conducted by district specialists.
- Engage staff in developing a set of observable indicators of effective differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- Use the agreed-upon set of observable indicators for “walk through” classroom visits; provide feedback to staff.
- Encourage grade level teams in sharing lesson plans that incorporate differentiated strategies.
- Use one faculty meeting a month for exploring a particular DI strategy (determined by staff needs assessment).
- Use regularly scheduled grade-level meetings to examine assessment data (from district benchmark assessments and state test results) and make plans for improving sub-group student performance. (Note: May involve some regrouping of students across classrooms.)
# Backward Design Plan for a District Implementation Plan

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

### Goal(s):
- Ensure a more thorough understanding of what UbD is and how it can improve our daily work.
- Supervisors will be able to observe indicators of successful implementation and provide feedback to faculty on the application of UbD principles throughout the school year.
- Faculty will be able to effectively design, implement and review quality UbD units that are aligned to standards.

### Understanding(s):
- Effective curriculum/units/daily lessons design evolves “backward” from clear goals and is aligned across all three stages.
- UbD is a way of thinking more carefully about curriculum/units/daily lessons design; it is neither a prescriptive program nor just a template for design.
- UbD design process is non-linear and ongoing.
- Teaching and assessing for understanding enhances learning of content standards.

### Essential Question(s):
- Why are the best curricula/units/lessons designed “backwards”?
- What is good design? How does UbD support curriculum/unit/lesson design?
- Why teach for understanding?
- How will we know that students really understand?
- How will we know that as a district we are moving from an awareness stage to an application stage in the change process?

### Knowledge:  Staff will know...
- the 3 stages of “backward design”
- characteristics of “big ideas” and “essential questions”
- the six facets of understanding and GRASPS
- the WHEREETO elements of instructional planning
- design standards of UbD

### Skills:  Staff will be able to...
- develop understandings, essential questions and assessment evidence.
- design units using the “backward design” template that meet UbD Design Standards.
- review other designs against the Design Standards.

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

### Direct Evidence:
- Develop draft designs using UbD template and tools.
- All staff participate in a school-based unit peer review process for feedback and making necessary revisions.
- Pilot the UbD units, reflect on results, and plan for changes.
- Participate in regional peer review processes for final approval prior to District curriculum adoption.
- Principals integrate UbD standards into supervision and evaluation process, and observe implementation of UbD principles applied in daily lessons.

### Indirect Evidence:
- Pre- and post-workshop surveys.
- Observations of participants’ understandings, questions, misconceptions, and frustrations.
- Quality of responses on exercises and worksheets.
- Participants’ self-assessments and reflections on their understandings and design.
- Written and oral feedback on workshops and UbD implementation
- “Needs” statements for future professional development.

## Stage 3 – Action Plan

- Work as school-based teams to establish clear goals aligned to state standards.
- Regional curriculum committees will review and revise the regional curriculum guides to create common goals and core rubrics for assessment on a continuous basis as part of District’s Curriculum Development plan.
- Utilize portions of faculty meetings to facilitate deeper understanding of unit design and share works in progress.
- Provide guided design work time and workshops as needed.
- Build in opportunities for eams to work on units (e.g., through release time, summer work, after-school work).
- Provide opportunities for interested faculty to advance their learning through regional and/or school-based study groups, and local, regional, state, and national conferences.
- Provide ongoing peer review training opportunities in order to build expertise first regionally and then locally.
- Publish approved units and excellent UbD models on ubdechange.org and school-based intranets.
- Administrators will monitor implementation, providing faculty with ongoing input using observable indicators.
### Backward Design Plan for a Workshop on *Understanding by Design*  

#### Stage 1 – Desired Results

**Understanding(s):**
- Effective curriculum design evolves “backward” from clear goals and is aligned across all 3 stages.
- UbD is a way of thinking more carefully about curriculum design; it is not a prescriptive program.
- Using design standards improves quality.
- The UbD design process is non-linear and iterative.
- Teaching and assessing for understanding enhances learning of content standards.

**Essential Question(s):**
- Why are the best curriculum designs “backwards”?
- What is good design? How does UbD support effective curriculum design?
- How does “continuous improvement” apply to curriculum design?
- Why teach for understanding?
- How will we know that students really understand?
- What is the difference between understanding and knowing?

**Staff will know...**
- the 3 stages of “backward design”
- characteristics of “big ideas” & “essential questions”
- the 6 facets of understanding and GRASPS
- the WHERE TO elements of instructional planning
- design standards for UbD

**Staff will be able to...**
- develop understandings, essential questions, and assessment evidence
- draft a unit in the Template
- review designs against the Design Standards

#### Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task(s):**
- Develop a draft design using the UbD template and tools. (Design meets most of the UbD design standards.)
- Participate in a peer review process using design standards and provide feedback to designers.

**Other Evidence:**
- pre- and post-workshop surveys
- observations of participants’ understandings/questions/misconceptions/frustrations
- quality of responses on exercises and worksheets
- participant self-assessments and reflections on their understandings and design
- written and oral feedback to presenter

#### Stage 3 – Learning Plan

**Learning Activities: (selected)**
- overview of session, performance goal, meet in role-alike groups
- exercise on Good Design
- study and discuss “before” and “after” design examples
- guided design work on each stage
- watch and discuss relevant video clips
- “gallery walk” to review participants’ designs
- lecture/discussion on key design elements and issues
- peer review against design standards
Essential Questions to Promote Staff Inquiry and Reflection
(examples)

MISSION and BELIEFS
• To what extent does our (team, school, district, community) share a common Mission?
• What educational beliefs about teaching and learning do we hold?
• What assumptions about learning guide our instructional and assessment practices?
• To what extent do our policies, priorities, and actions reflect these beliefs?
• To what extent do our policies, priorities, and actions honor our Mission?

STANDARDS
• How would people know that we are a “standards-based” school/district?
• What are observable indicators at the classroom? ... school? ...district?
• To what extent are we “walking the talk” and using standards to guide our work (e.g., curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional development, staff appraisal)?

CURRICULUM
• Why should curriculum be planned “backward”?
• To what extent is our curriculum coherent and aligned?
• Does our curriculum highlight enduring knowledge and authentic performance?
• What content should we “cover” and what needs to be “uncovered”?
• To what extent do textbooks function as the syllabus (rather than a resource)?

ASSESSMENT
• How are we doing? What evidence is needed to answer this question?
• How will we know that students really understand the “big” ideas?
• Are we assessing everything we value (or only those things that are most easily tested and graded)?
• Is anything important “falling through the cracks” because we are not assessing it?
• How might our assessments promote learning, not simply measure it?

INSTRUCTION
• To what extent is our instruction engaging and effective?
• To what extent does our instruction reflect research and best practices?
• To what extent are we engaging students in “doing” the subject?
• Are we effectively teaching ALL students?
Essential Questions to Promote Staff Inquiry and Reflection
(continued)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
• To what extent do our professional development practices reflect the research on adult learning?
• How does our staff view professional development?
• To what extent are our professional development practices “results” oriented?
• Is our professional development appropriately differentiated?

CHANGE PROCESS
• What do we believe about educational change? To what extent are these shared beliefs?
• To what extent are various initiatives seen as connected and coherent (as opposed to being seen as separate things or “add ons”)?
• How might we “work smarter” and more effectively?

POLICY, STRUCTURES, CULTURE
• To what extent do our policies, structures, and culture reflect our beliefs about learning?
• How might we restructure to enhance learning?
• What is the best use of our time when teachers are not with students?
• What messages do our policies send?
• Is our staff appraisal process working?
• To what extent do we have a culture of continuous improvement?
• What existing factors support this reform? What factors resist change?
• How do our leaders receive the honest feedback they need to improve?
• To what extent does our grading and reporting system communicate clearly and honestly?
• Are resources (e.g., time, money, facilities, technology) being used optimally to advance learning?

OTHER
• Would you want your child to attend our school?

• other: ________________________________________________
Observable Indicators of Success

What if the reform vision was actualized? What would we routinely expect to see in classrooms, schools, and throughout the district? Use the spaces below to identify specific observable indicators of reform success.

**Classroom:**

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**School:**

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**District:**

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Big ideas and essential questions are central to the work of students.
- Teachers can explain the connection between big ideas, essential questions, and state standards.
- Big ideas and/or essential questions are posted in classrooms and referred to on a regular basis.
- Students continually return to the examination and understanding of big ideas and essential questions throughout the program.

Classroom instruction and assessment practices reflect the WHERETO elements.
- Students are informed of big ideas, essential questions, performance requirements and evaluative criteria.
- "Hooks" are used to motivate and interest students in learning the big ideas and pursuing essential questions.
- Students explore knowledge and skills in connection to big ideas and essential questions.
- Students work towards success on performance tasks and other assessments.
- Multiple assessments (including self-assessments) are used regularly to provide feedback on student understanding, improve student work, and measure achievement.
- Significant classroom time is spent on inquiry and reflection.
- Differentiated instruction is evident in various ways (e.g. flexible grouping, attention to learning styles, student selection of assessments, etc.)

Students explore and reveal understanding through the six facets.
- Assessments (not necessarily all) require students to explain, interpret, apply, give perspective, empathize, or examine something about themselves.
- Instructional strategies (not all) require students to explain, interpret, apply, give perspective, empathize, or examine something about themselves.
- Students explain and justify their work on a regular basis.

Authentic performance is used regularly to apply knowledge and explore and reveal understanding.
- Performance tasks and other assessments that apply knowledge are an integral part of the learning/assessment process.
- Rubrics and models/exemplars are used regularly and shared with students.
- Teacher regularly monitors authentic student work and provides feedback to help students improve their work.

Teachers use a range of teaching techniques, with an emphasis on interactive instructional strategies.
- Teacher acts as coach and facilitator of learning
- Teacher creates situations in which students ask questions, develop strategies for solving problems, and communicate with one another.
- Students are expected to explain their answers and show how they arrived at their conclusions.
Use the continuum to analyze the classroom practices in your school according to the following UbD reform elements.

**Desired Results**

1. Learning activities clearly address established content standards.
2. The textbook is one resource among many used in teaching to the standards.
3. Instruction and assessment are focused on exploring “big ideas” and essential questions.
4. Student understanding of the “big ideas” in content standards is assessed through complex performance tasks using the six facets.
5. Teacher evaluations of student products/performances are based upon known criteria, performance standards, and models.
6. The students regularly self assess their work based on the established criteria.
7. Teachers regularly pose open-ended questions with no obvious right answer. They are designed to direct and deepen inquiry and understanding.
8. Students are given regular opportunities to rethink and revise their work based on feedback from on-going (formative) assessments.

**Needed Changes**

1. Learning activities do not typically address established content standards.
2. Textbooks serve as the primary teaching resource. (The textbook functions as the syllabus.)
3. Instruction consists primarily of content coverage, doing activities, and/or preparation for high-stakes, standardized tests.
4. Assessment consists primarily of quizzes and tests of factual knowledge and discrete skills.
5. The students do not know (i.e., cannot explain) how their work will be evaluated. They are typically not shown models of exemplary work.
6. Students do not regularly self assess their work according to established criteria.
7. Most teacher questions are convergent, leading questions, pointing toward the knowledge students are expected to learn.
8. Formative assessments are not routinely used. Students are rarely given opportunities to rethink and revise their work based on specific feedback.
### Using Backward Design for Action Planning

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<tr>
<th>Stage 1 – Desired Results</th>
<th>Stage 2 – Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify observable indicators of success for ___________________________</td>
<td>Identify needed changes.</td>
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### Considering Multiple Sources of Data

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<thead>
<tr>
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| ❑ state achievement tests  
| ❑ national standardized tests  
| ❑ local achievement tests/ (e.g., common exams)  
| ❑ core performance tasks  
| ❑ student work  
| ❑ grade distributions  
| ❑ graduation/dropout rates  
| ❑ other: ________________ | ❑ surveys of constituent groups (e.g., parents, business leaders, community members)  
| ❑ school accreditations  
| ❑ structured observations by visitors (e.g., critical friend, university partner)  
| ❑ surveys of students  
| ❑ surveys of teachers  
| ❑ surveys of administrators  
| ❑ surveys of community  
| ❑ structured observations (e.g., classroom visits)  
| ❑ other: ________________ |

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| ❑ surveys of administrators  
| ❑ surveys of community  
| ❑ structured observations (e.g., classroom visits)  
| ❑ other: ________________ |
Analyzing External Test Data

- criterion-referenced: 

- norm-referenced: 

- college admission: 

  - What achievement targets are being measured?
  - Who are the students tested?
  - What do the numbers in the data represent?
  - What strengths and weaknesses are revealed by the data?
  - How are different population groups performing?
  - How do these results relate to established performance standards?
  - How do our results compare to those of similar (“best in class”) schools?
  - How do results on different tests relate?
  - Have results changed over time? In what ways?

Summary statement:
Analyzing External Test Data (examples)

☑ criterion-referenced: State Reading Assessment (gr. 3)

☑ norm-referenced: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills - Reading (gr. 2)

Summary statement: The grade 2 reading median percentile score for the school on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills has averaged between 65 and 70 for the past three years. In this period, students did well in word identification but were weak in inferring meaning and in identifying sequential relationships. On average, however, only 35% of the grade 3 students scored at the “proficient” level on the state reading assessment in the same three-year period. Lowest performance on the state test was in distinguishing cause from effect and in explaining the extent to which predictions were confirmed by the text and why. There was a small performance gap on both measures between African American and white students. Girls outperformed boys every year on both the criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments.

☑ norm-referenced: Terra Nova - Mathematics (gr. 4)

Summary statement: For the past four years, between 75% and 80% of the school’s grade 4 students tested “on or above grade level” in mathematics on Terra Nova. On average, however, only 50% of the students who entered the school within the last 12 months tested at least “on grade level.” Areas of most concern over the years for all students have been in geometry and spatial sense; data analysis, statistics, and probability; and problem solving and mathematical reasoning. Students new to the school also typically had the most difficulty with computation and estimation.
Example – Using Department Meeting Time to Examine Student Performance on a State Test

Minutes of the Meeting

The meeting began at 2:15. Margaret explained what she hopes departments will accomplish by meeting on a 7-12 basis. We have to make sure all students have similar learning experiences as they go through the grades and through the state exams. Although our results on the state exams at the end of grades 8, 10, and 11 have been good, they could be even better, particularly in terms of having even more students perform at the mastery level.

The three state exams (Global History and Geography, Economics, Government and US History) for June 2001 were distributed, along with an item analysis for the multiple-choice questions.

The data on the Grade 8 exam had been broken down so we could see how many students selected each of the four choices for the 45 MC questions. Margaret asked us to look at the questions that were most frequently missed, focusing not just on the content of the question, but also on the most popular wrong answer for each of those questions. She feels we can get a better idea of where our students have gaps in their understanding if we examine their incorrect answers.

We looked at Question #23 on the Grade 8 exam, dealing with the free-enterprise system. Why did nearly as many students pick the wrong answer of stockholders being guaranteed a profit as picked the right answer of businesses competing for consumer dollars? Was it the wording of the question, or are they lacking some understanding of the free-enterprise system?

The item analyses for the two high school exams were less revealing, since they only provided the percentages of students who answered each question correctly, without the number of students selecting the four choices for each of the 50 questions.

We spent some time examining Question #25 on the Global exam, dealing with the main cause of the mass starvation in Ireland during the 19th century. The correct answer was the failure of the potato crop. We suspect many students blamed it on the war between Protestants and Catholics in northern Ireland, since they had studied that topic not long before they took the exam. They probably learn more about the potato famine in 11th grade, but is there a reason why they didn’t know it prior to that? The state expects social studies teachers to be teaching that topic, and our library media centers should soon receive a State Ed. guide to teaching about the potato famine.

In terms of what to do with this in future meetings, we agreed that everyone would focus on one of the three exams, preferably not an exam at that teacher’s grade level. Margaret asked us to look not so much at the specific content or the wording of the problem questions, but rather to look at the concepts or larger understandings that the students might be missing. Also, are there particular types of questions that our students tend to miss, e.g. cartoons, speaker questions, tables and graphs? Each person selected one exam to study.

We agreed to hold future meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, so the next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 16 in my room (C120) at the high school. When we meet on the 16th, we’ll break down into three groups, according to the three exams, so people can discuss what they noticed on the exam they reviewed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.
Questions To Ask When Examining Student Work

Use the following questions to guide the examination of student work.

**Describe**
- What knowledge and skills are assessed?
- What kinds of thinking are required (e.g., recall, interpretation, evaluation)?
- Are these the results I (we) expected? Why or why not?
- In what areas did the student(s) perform best?
- What weaknesses are evident? What misconceptions are revealed?
- Are there any surprises? What anomalies exist?
- Is there evidence of improvement or decline? If so, what caused the changes?

**Evaluate**
- By what criteria am I (are we) evaluating student work?
- Are these the most important criteria?
- How good is “good enough” (i.e., the performance standard)?

**Interpret**
- What does this work reveal about student learning and performance?
- What patterns are evident?
- What questions does this work raise?
- Is this work consistent with other achievement data?
- Are there different possible explanations for these results?

**Identify Improvement Actions**
- What teacher action(s) are needed to improve learning and performance?
- What student action(s) are needed to improve learning and performance?
- What systemic action(s) at the school/district level are needed to improve learning and performance (e.g., changes in curriculum, schedule, grouping)?
- Other: ________________________________________________?
Data-Driven Improvement Planning

Based on an analysis of achievement data and student work:

• What patterns of weakness are noted?  • What specific areas are most in need of improvement?

- problem solving and mathematical reasoning are generally weak
- students do not effectively explain their reasoning and their use of strategies
- appropriate mathematical language is not always used

What specific improvement actions will we take?

- Increase our use of “non routine” problems that require mathematical reasoning.
- Explicitly teach (and regularly review) specific problem solving strategies.
- Develop a poster of problem solving strategies and post in each math classroom.
- Increase use of “think alouds” (by teacher & students) to model mathematical reasoning.
- Develop a “word wall” of key mathematical terms and use the terms regularly.
- Revise our problem solving rubric to emphasize explanation & use of mathematical language.
Data-Driven Improvement Planning

Based on an analysis of achievement data and student work:

- What *patterns* of weakness are noted?  
- What *specific* areas are most in need of improvement?

What *specific* improvement actions will we take?
Professional and Collaboration Time (PACT)

Charge:
We will use PACT to collaborate within various “Learning Communities” to grow professionally, and to collaborate together to enhance our planning, teaching and assessment with a focus on student learning. PACT is not intended for departmental or team “housekeeping” or for individual teacher planning.

Goals:
To improve curriculum quality and alignment
To analyze “results” and student work
To enhance instructional and assessment practices
To increase professional conversations between ASD faculty members
To better implement school improvement initiatives through collaboration

Schedule:
• Tuesday 1:10 – 3:10 (1:10 – 2:10 = horizontal teams, 2:10 – 3:10 = vertical teams if needed)

Suggestions of collaborative tasks:
– looking at student work
– analyzing data to improve student learning (e.g., NWEA scores, AP results, etc)
– evaluating and refining the quality of assessment tasks & rubrics
– planning among teachers who teach common courses
– coordinating among grade level teams (e.g., vertical alignment of curriculum)
– developing common assessments/rubrics (including moderation of assessments)
– planning for integration of units
– reviewing UbD Units and Atlas Rubicon Curriculum Maps
– discussing professional readings
– planning for implementation of new school/team programs
– participating in professional development
Options for “Making Time”

Staff need time to analyze assessment results (external and internal), examine student work, make improvement plans and conduct action research into persistent achievement problems. Consider the following ways of making time for these important “results-oriented” actions. Each has been implemented successfully by schools in North America.

1. Half the faculty covers for the whole faculty once per month on pre-assigned days; classes double up and/or teachers of “specials” plan large-group activities

2. Teachers spend one hour per month on “results-oriented” actions, taken as needed from current faculty/department/team meetings and in-service days

3. Schools introduce late start/early release one day per month

4. Each grade-level/department team is allocated two hours per week, with coverage provided by other teams, administrators, student teachers, or substitutes

5. Five days of summer work become part of the contract*

6. Two hours of non-contact, staff time are added to each Monday, then traded for three days added to vacation

7. One permanent sub per grade level is hired for the needed period of time

8. The school year is reorganized—half-day twice per month should be scheduled with no students; add 5 minutes to other instructional days for the minutes lost

9. Teachers meet for an extended lunch and resource period or assembly schedule.

10. Providers of special group learning (Project Adventure, etc.) give assemblies to release teachers for three half-days per year.

11. Roving subs, hired for a day, release grade level/department teams

* Though it is imperative to free up time over the course of a year to permit “results-oriented” work and action research to occur, there is singular value in bringing together design teams in the summer for intensive training and curriculum development work.
Pathways To UbD Reform – Possible Actions
(continued)

SETTLING IN – “creating an infrastructure”

Goal: to establish the policies, roles, resources, incentives, etc. to support the systemic implementation of UbD reform throughout the school/district

Possible Actions:

❏ Create a school/district UbD curriculum map based (i.e., containing understandings, essential questions, and core performance tasks).

❏ Sponsor 3-5 day UbD curriculum/assessment design workshops within the district (or partner with a neighboring district).

❏ Develop common scoring rubrics for core performance tasks.

❏ Develop & implement a 5-year action plan for UbD curriculum development.

❏ Develop & implement a 3-5 year action plan for staff development on UbD.

❏ Develop and implement a new teacher induction program around UbD.

❏ Work in grade level or department groups to review and evaluate student work on core performance tasks. Select school/district-wide “anchors” for the rubrics.

❏ Establish and implement Action Research/Lesson Study teams around achievement problem areas.

❏ Develop a “standards-based” grading and reporting system.

❏ Revise the teacher/administrative appraisal process based on UbD.

❏ Apply “backward design” to other school/district initiatives.

❏ Seek state, federal and foundation grants to support UbD implementation.

❏ other: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________
Pathways To UbD Reform – Possible Actions

The following three pages contain practical ideas for: 1) exploring the key ideas of Understanding by Design by a “scout” team, 2) introducing UbD to the full staff, and 3) implementing UbD in a systemic fashion at the school or district level.

INTRODUCTION – “scouting the territory”

Goal: to introduce staff to the key ideas of UbD and consider how UbD supports current district initiatives and future school/district goals

Possible Actions:

☐ Read and discuss selected sections of the book, Understanding by Design.

☐ View and discuss the ASCD videos, What is Understanding? and/or Using Backward Design.

☐ Send a representative team of teachers and administrators to a local, regional, or national introductory UbD workshop/conference.

☐ Sponsor an introductory UbD workshop within the district or school (e.g., on an in-service day).

☐ Explore UbD-related Essential Questions in faculty and team meetings (e.g., How can we teach to all these content standards in engaging and effective ways?; What content is worth understanding? How do we know that students really understand what we teach?; How do we raise achievement without fixating on “practice tests”?).

☐ Send a “scout” team to visit a school/district in the region using UbD, and report back on potential benefits for our school/district.

☐ Have a small group preview the ubdexchange.org web site.

☐ other: ___________________________________________________________
Pathways To UbD Reform – Possible Actions

(continued)

GETTING STARTED – “blazing a trail”

Goal: to initiate specific actions for developing and deepening understanding of UbD

Possible Actions:

☒ Identify a cadre of teachers/administrators to spearhead UbD efforts in the school/district.

☐ Send cadre members to a 3-5 day regional or national UbD Institute.

☐ Sponsor an introductory UbD workshop (e.g., on an in-service day).

☐ Provide time/incentives for cadre to design and share UbD units.

☐ Conduct peer reviews of locally-designed units.

☐ Purchase membership in the ubdexchange.org web site for cadre and have them:
  – search and share UbD “blue ribbon” units on topics taught
  – review existing units on the web site using the UbD Design Standards
  – design a unit on-line and request Expert Review.

☐ Offer incentive grants to teams or schools interested in exploring UbD.

☐ Work in grade level or department groups to unpack content standards (i.e., identify understandings and essential questions).

☐ Work in grade level or department groups to prioritize content standards and/or textbook content using the 3 ovals prioritizing worksheet.

☐ Analyze current achievement data to identify areas of student misunderstanding and develop intervention plans.

☐ other: ___________________________________________________________
Ten Ways to Kill UbD – by design

1. Mandate that every teacher must use UbD for ALL of their planning (without sufficient training, on-going support, or some structured planning time).

2. Introduce UbD as this year’s focus (T.Y.N.T. – “this year’s new thing”). Such an approach suggests that UbD can be understood and fully implemented in a year (it can’t). In cases where a school or district does a “new thing” each year, staff are unlikely to invest too heavily since “this too shall pass.”

3. Attempt to implement multiple initiatives simultaneously (e.g., Differentiated Instruction, Curriculum Mapping, Marzano’s Strategies that Work, Assessment for Learning, UbD). While such initiatives have merit and naturally connect with one another, each requires time and support to implement well. Biting off too much at one time can overwhelm staff and lead to ineffective implementation of anything.

4. Jumping right into UbD training under the assumption that staff understand the need for UbD and welcome it as a solution to problems that they “own.”

5. Provide a one-day introductory presentation on UbD and assume that teachers now have the understanding and skill to implement it effectively.

6. Send a few persons to attend a UbD conference and expect them to come back and train all the district teachers, especially before they have a chance to “truly” pilot it in their own classrooms. An introductory workshop on UbD is a good starting place but it will not develop training-level expertise.

7. Provide UbD training for teachers, but not for administrators.

8. Begin initial training and implementation of UbD without a long-term professional development plan or strategic means of collecting appropriate data to evaluate how effectively teachers are using UbD.

9. Begin initial training and implementation without built-in support structures or time allotted for unit revisions/reflection or examining student work.

10. Offer initial training without clear expectations or incentives for teachers to use UbD for their curriculum planning.
### Backward Design for Action Planning

#### Stage 1 – Desired Results

**Goal for the Reform Initiative or Needed Improvement**

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<th>Understandings:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
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<th>Knowledge and Skills:</th>
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# Backward Design for Action Planning

## Stage 2 – Needed Evidence

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<tr>
<th>Direct Evidence:</th>
<th>Plan to collect and analyze it:</th>
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### Using Backward Design for Action Planning

#### Stage 3: Action Plan

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<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Groups/#s Involved</th>
<th>Date(s) - Time Frame</th>
<th>Budget: Amount/Source(s)</th>
<th>Evaluation Plan</th>
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## Using Backward Design for Action Planning (continued)

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<th>Groups/ #s Involved</th>
<th>Date(s) – Time Frame</th>
<th>Budget – Amount/ Source(s)</th>
<th>Evaluation Plan</th>
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<th>Years 3 – 5</th>
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